Never Cage A Predator

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/13123224.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter, Past Will Graham/Margot Verger, Will Graham/Alana Bloom if you squint
Characters:	Mason Verger, Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham, Dr. Cordell Doemling
Additional Tags:	Wendigo Hannibal, FBI profiler Will, Protective Hannibal, Pet Hannibal?, Murder Tableaus, Person suit? What person suit?, Cage mates, Kidnapping, Mason being his usual sadistic self, Someone Help Will Graham, Mostly Will POV, Animalistic Hannibal, learning
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Antlers the Colour of Blood
Stats:	Published: 2018-01-23 Words: 10,448 Chapters: 1/1

Never Cage A Predator

by Ghostwriter98

Summary

Will Graham finds himself trapped in a cage with wendigo Hannibal and does his best to survive. Unfortunately, Hannibal somehow misinterprets Will's behaviour as being of a friendly (and potentially romantic) nature and responds accordingly with dead bodies. A fic wherein Will is constantly terrified, Hannibal is unbearably smitten and Mason is so done with the both of them.

Notes

Okay, so I've made weird rules for this universe. Firstly, wendigos are classified as a separate animal species to humans and are therefore not supernatural or mythological beings. Most wendigos don't speak English or any human language. They have their own form of communication. Most wendigos are born wendigos. It's a really hard and lengthy process to convert a person into a wendigo. People hunt wendigos and sell them as pets in the black market because they're very rare to come by, fetch a good price and are hard to catch. They're also not very well- known creatures.

See the end of the work for more notes

Will Graham has many regrets in his life; continuing to work for his ungrateful boss Jack Crawford, kissing and consequently losing his closest friend Alana Bloom and empathizing too closely with the Minnesota Shrike are a few to name the least. However, the one that really takes the cake is sleeping with Margot Verger because, as Will recently has the misfortune of discovering, her brother is batshit crazy.

"Last chance, Graham. Where is my darling Margot?" Will doesn't respond, just bites off a groan.

"I see." A disappointed sigh and then Mason's men kick Will hard enough to have him curling into the fetal position. Will is aching everywhere. He feels regret. So much regret. Will's throbbing (and hopefully not broken) nose smears blood onto the white slate. He sees expensive black shoes in his blurry vision. A squeak and a flash of skin near his head has him instinctively flinching away. A moment of silence passes and then there is a wet noise. Will realizes with growing concern that Mason has just tasted his blood.

“Hmm, it’s definitely more tangy than tears,” Mason contemplates slowly, licking his lips. “Best to add some human blood to my diet, Cordell.”

“Of course,” Cordell easily agrees, moving towards Will with the sole purpose of doing just that.

“Ah ah ah,” Mason tutts, stopping him with a hand gesture. “I think it’s time my favourite pet had a feeding, don’t you? Give him to Hannibal.”

“Hannibal?” Will wheezes. “Who the fuck is Hannibal?”

Cordell just smiles. A chilling, frightening pull of his lips that looks more like a snarl.

“I think the question you should be asking is *what*. *What* is Hannibal?”

Will grimaces at that because whatever Hannibal is, Will is pretty sure it isn’t a harmless puppy.

A soaked cloth is quickly placed over his nose and all thoughts empty Will's mind.

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Will wakes with a gasp and a sting of pain. He tries to move but finds his hands have been bound behind his back.

“Wake up sunshine,” Mason croons and gives him another slap for good measure.

Will bares his teeth. “You won’t get away with this! Jack will come looking for me!”

“Oh yes, you’re his little pet profiler, aren’t you?” Mason bops his nose in a degrading fashion. “What did Freddie Lounds say again? It takes a killer to know one. Are you a psychopathic killer, Will?”

Will scowls. “I haven't killed anyone in cold blood. I don’t deserve this.”

“While that may be true, you have done something else very naughty. My dear sister, you see, is off limits. And you fucked her, hard enough to put a baby inside of her.”

Will raises his chin and makes eye contact with Mason for the first time. “You call her your sister and yet you don’t really see her as one. She’s more of a possession than anything else. A puppet to play with. You pull the strings and watch her dance but you’ve broken her one too many times and you're scared. No, not scared. Not of such a pitiful being. *Worried.* Worried that you’ve broken her and now she’s unpredictable. Who knows what stupid decisions she might make to try and escape you. What she might be willing to gamble.” Will blinks, coming back to himself. “Sorry to break it to you Mason but you can’t control who Margot dates or what she does. She’s not your little puppet anymore. She’s proven that.”

“Oh wow!” Mason claps loudly. “What an impressive party trick. That whole puppet thing, bravo! There’s just one teeny tiny thing you’ve gotten wrong. I *can* control who Margot sees and dates because, well, without me, she’s nothing.” Mason pouts in an exaggerated fashion. “Margot thinks I’m just being mean and controlling but I’m really on her side. She doesn’t know what’s best for her but *I* do. And when I find her and show her that, she'll understand. She always does.”

Will rolls his eyes. “Oh yeah, I’m sure she’s full of gratitude that her brother is a sadi-”

He finds himself unable to finish that sentence because material is being stuffed into his mouth. He’s yanked by a strong grip behind him. Will sniffs, the increasingly familiar smell of herbs and bacon fills his nose. *Cordell.* The man pushes him while Mason skips ahead, whistling some eerily cheerful tune. They approach a giant cage in the middle of the surrounding woodland at the back of Mason’s property. It doesn’t look too inviting with its thick, heavy, metal bars running vertically along the perimeter in a similar manner to that of a prison. Wire fencing mustn’t have been strong enough to hold whatever’s living in here. The bars are tall and bend inwards to form the roof.

Will's eyes are covered as Mason enters a password into a small attached building to the cage. He gestures to Cordell and Will is dragged into a short corridor while Mason waits outside. There’s a thud and the grinding of metal behind him. There's another door and Cordell opens this one too while obscuring Will's vision. The ties are broken around Will’s wrists and before he can react, he’s falling. Will lands hard on the ground, so disoriented that he completely misses the sound of banging as the second door is resealed. Will hurriedly spits out the makeshift gag in his mouth and moves into a defensive crouch. *Find an exit*.

Will tries the door but it’s locked and unopenable from the inside. *Worth a shot.* He turns around, trying to get his bearings. There are many trees, thick trunked with green, lush leaves. The ground is soft and covered in bushes, grasses and moss-covered rocks. Will glances upwards where he sees a flurry of movement, accompanying the blur of colours is a

chitter. Will's heart thuds fast in his chest. The enclosure is huge. Hannibal must be a beast to require such a big habitat. *What could Hannibal be? A black bear? A wolf?*

Something glittery catches Will's eye. He squints up at a nearby tree, staring intently at a little hole in the trunk and – *hang on, is that a camera?* Will almost chokes in disbelief. *Is Mason actually filming this?* Will feels like he's on some kind of twisted reality television show.

And next week on Survival At Vergers, the contestant is special agent Will Graham who will be forced to defeat the creature of the woods with his bare hands. Will mocks in his best announcer voice. *Can he do it? No, no, he really can't.*

There's a rustle nearby and he stiffens. It could be this Hannibal thing but, knowing Mason, it could just as likely be a fellow human trapped in the same situation. Will could really use the help of another person right now. He follows in the general direction of the noise, grabbing a nearby tree branch as a weapon since Mason's men already took away his gun. Will eventually comes across a deer, or rather, the remains of one. The belly has been gouged open, long thick gashes slicing through the vulnerable flesh so that the innards could tumble out. Most of its internal organs have already been devoured. Will knows this because there is a little trail of offal that disappears into the trees. The neck*, damn* – Will stares at the small scraps of fur and the bite riddled stringy flesh that barely connects the head to the body. If Will didn't view mutilated bodies on a daily basis, he would most likely have been sick. Fortunately, this seems mild compared to what he usually sees in the field. Of course, usually said serial killers are long gone when Will is observing the scene so he guesses that makes the deer's death a little more frightening.

A twig breaks and Will whirls around.

Alright, okay, so it's a lot more frightening. Will tries to even his breathing and keep calm. The more rational he is, the more likely he will stay alive.

He hears the sound of scratching and turns, noticing the tree to his right has miraculously sported claw marks. All calm promptly goes out the window and Will's mind shifts into overdrive.

This can't be it? He can't die like this! Die for having sex with a woman he didn't even know was part of a sadistic family. Will thinks of his father during this rather inconvenient time. Remembers him warning him sternly with his hands on his hips about being careful and using protection in that awkward way parents so often do. Why hadn't he listened again? Margot said she was on birth control, right? It's hard to remember. The memory of that night had the foggy quality of a dream. The haziness might have been because of the alcohol that warmed his veins or it might have been because he had tried so hard to imagine Alana the entire time...

Will smacks his head with his right hand. *Stay here. Stay here. Don't go inside. Stay here.*

Another scratch appears on another tree. This time closer to him. Will grits his teeth and slowly moves backwards, gentle movements so as not to startle his aggressive pursuer. He

continues backwards until he reaches the bars of the enclosure and presses himself against the walls.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in -

Another rustle and Will knows this could be it. He thinks of his son. *Poor baby. He'll never know what happened to his dad. He'll think I deserted him like Mum did. Constantly wondering if it was his fault. That if he was a more normal kid, she would have stayed. If-*

Will doesn't even realize he's voicing his fears aloud until a response comes from a most unwelcome source.

"Don't worry, Willy. I'll be sure to show baby Verger this little video of his daddy when he grows up," Mason pauses. "If he lives, that is. There are so many things that can go wrong in pregnancy. So many potential complications."

Will feels sick at the words. He spins around and looks outside, squinting for Mason. He's nowhere in sight. That means… Will's mouth gapes because of course Mason would install a speaker system into his little cage of horrors so he could taunt his victims. *That twisted bastard.* Will feels his anger and fear reach boiling point.

"I will get out of here somehow," Will promises in a steely voice. "And when I do there will be a *reckoning."*

Mason lets out an awful bout of loud and obnoxious laughter.

Will barks out a curse and promptly freezes at the feeling of warm breath on the back of his neck. He squeezes his eyes shut because if he's about to be torn apart, he doesn't want to see *by what*. His ears strain and suddenly he notices that the woods around him have grown deathly silent. The only sound is the slight inhale and exhale of whatever the fuck is pressed behind him. Will can tell the creature is big, larger than him in height and weight. It feels hard and muscular though the empath doesn't feel the tickle of fur. *Not a bear or wolf then. It doesn't matter. Who cares what it is when the outcome is still the same?* Will flinches at the sound of sniffing and stills. He grows confused as the minutes tick by and nothing happens. Slowly, Will turns around and stares straight into the soulless eyes of a monster. He doesn't think, just lets out a startled yell. The creature is built like a man although it has no body fat and it's all muscle and bones. Its eyes are a milky white and perched on top of its bald head is a rack of intimidating antlers. His human looking legs morph into hooves.

Holy shit. Will thinks. *What is that?*

The creature raises a hand; a long, clawed limb that looks a thousand times sharper than any knife Will's ever seen.

Many lives flash before Will's eyes then. Strangely enough, none of them are his own. They are the victims of serial killer's he has analyzed. All of their own gruesome deaths. All the people he couldn't save. Abigail with her throat slit, a man with a head full of bees, a human instrument. Will sees them all before him as he waits his own grisly end. Will groans because *it's not fair*. It's not fair that even during his death, his head is filled with other people.

The pressure of a claw on his lips grounds him. The creature does the same to its own mouth.

Shh. It seems to be saying. *Shh or else I'll make you.*

Will wonders how much blood must have stained the very grass he stands on because people couldn't follow that one simple instruction. Will sure as hell isn't going to be one of them. He swallows thickly and nods in understanding. The creature walks around him, eyes accessing and roaming. It prods with its clawed limbs at Will's arms and legs and at his caved in stomach. Will takes the time while the creature is distracted to look for potential escape routes. He tries to ignore the nose nudging his neck. The creature must sniff the copious amount of sweat underneath his shirt though because it recoils. Will snickers. For once, he's glad that he hasn't been looking after himself. He mustn't be a very tasty meal when he's half starved, sweaty and reeking of fear.

The thing, *Hannibal*, hesitates before glancing back at his deer and then his new food source. It seemingly (and rightfully) decides that the animal is a much better option than a twitchy, half-starved man and trots off in that direction.

Will audibly sighs with relief and collapses against the bars of his prison. Now he just has to survive the night. Hopefully by tomorrow Jack will have noticed something's wrong and alerted the authorities. Maybe Jack will even go as far as to actually solve a crime on his own for once.

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Tomorrow passes and goes and Will really isn't all that surprised. Jack has an almost uncanny ability to always let him down. Another day passes and another and Will realizes it's all up to him to keep himself alive and somewhat sane. *Nothing new there.*

Will stays deathly silent for the next few days and avoids Hannibal as part of his survival plan. How does he avoid Hannibal? Well, he has a surprisingly simple method. Whenever he sees a mangled animal carcass, he walks as far as he can in the opposite direction. It's *very* efficient. There's only one problem that Will hasn't anticipated with this whole keeping silent thing. His nightmares. Something he can't control. He cries out in his sleep so loudly some nights that it wakes himself up.

Will usually jolts awake to the sight of white eyes and a mouth thin with displeasure. He tries to avoid sleeping but sleep deprivation always gets the best of him. It finally reaches the point that Will is never sure if he's going to wake up again when he closes his eyes at night. Every day of this miserable life is a miracle so Will tries to make the most of it. He spends most of his time studying the flora surrounding him like the white petalled Bloodroots (Trust him, the irony of the name is not lost on him). He particularly loves the little stream that runs through one corner of the cage. It houses fish. It's not like the lake near his house but it's better than nothing so Will catches a few of the silvery fish with a sharp stick. He eats his earnings. It's not enough to fill him up but it does help ease the hunger somewhat. Will also

leaves a few fish for Hannibal as a peace offering. Sometimes, he also places a flower or two beside them if he's been particularly loud that night. He hopes his fish sacrifices clearly convey his message of: *Hey, look, I'm not completely useless. Please don't eat me.* Or*, I'm sorry I sleep badly and am loud. Please accept this fish as a piss poor apology.*

It also helps that Will has taken to rolling himself in mud, avoiding water and bathing at all costs and generally doing as much exercise as he can. The odor he's expelling is enough to make his own stomach turn. He can only imagine how terrible it is for a predator with such a honed sense of smell as Hannibal. But hey, the less appetizing he is, the better.

Both methods appear to be working because it has been almost a week and he's completely unscathed. Either that or Hannibal is just playing with his food? Ah great, now Will's gotten himself all anxious again.

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Will jostles into consciousness after a particularly violent nightmare. He rubs his face, trying to dispel the scent of death and blood that seems to have followed him into waking life. He jumps when his shirt leaves a wet trail on his face and he notices with alarm that blood - *real blood* - is drenched into the fabric. Will groans and closes his eyes. This is the end. Hannibal must have tired of his sleep gruntings and decided to kill him once and for all. At least Will doesn't feel any pain. Thank God for small mercies at least.

Will slowly opens his eyes and promptly lets out a rather manly scream. There's a dead body beside him. A body Will hasn't even realized he's been cuddling up against. Will doesn't know who it is. Even if the person was someone familiar to him, he doubts that he could recognize them with the way their face has been chewed off and their limbs twisted and broken. They've been placed strangely, pressed down onto the earth on their knees. Their palms are raised towards a low branched tree with two distinct branches that grow in opposite directions. A strange symbol has been painted with blood onto the bark and there are flowers. Many flowers strewn through the person's hair, covering their oddly bent legs and mangled arms. Will realizes with growing dread that the distorted human is him and the tree is Hannibal. The creature has accepted Will's offering. Not only that but Hannibal has misinterpreted his message of *Please don't eat me. I'm useful and give you food* and instead believes Will's sacrifice to be an act of worship, a *hey all mighty being that graces these woods. I am but a humble worshipper who wishes for your attention. Please bestow it upon me.*

Will doesn't know whether to laugh or cry at what his life has come too.

He instead swallows as a rather worrying thought enters his mind. Does this mean that Hannibal intends for him to eat the offering like he eats the fish Will leaves? No. No way in hell. Will *didn't ask* for this. He certainly *doesn't want* this.

Will promptly leaves the clearing in order to reorder his psyche. He's never been this distraught over a corpse before but then again he's never slept beside a dead body either. It looks like he's learning more about himself every day.

Will feels Hannibal before he sees him. A dark pressure at his back that swirls around him and engulfs. He tries his best not to empathize with the creature because all Will senses is a deep, uncontrollable hunger that leaves him feeling sick inside.

Hannibal points in the direction of his present.

Will shakes head to indicate that no, he doesn't like the mutilated body that has been left for him.

Hannibal points again, mouth ticking with displeasure this time.

"No!" Will scowls. Hannibal's face is blank and Will realizes it probably doesn't understand English or any other human language for that matter. It probably – *he probably* – Will corrects himself because now that he's close and it's not dark and Will is in a more rational state of mind, he can clearly see that the creature before him is completely and unabashedly naked. Will's eyes skitter as they dip downwards - and obviously male at that.

Silence descends with Will feeling very uncomfortable and Hannibal seeming amused.

The empath sighs heavily and wonders if he can teach Hannibal to understand when he's angry or uncomfortable from tone and facial expressions alone. It would certainly be useful to be able to convey to Hannibal how he's feeling. He might as well try.

Will makes a disapproving noise while pointing in the direction of the present.

Hannibal hesitates, seeming to get the vibe that he's unhappy. He gestures for Will to follow him and Will grudgingly does. When he reaches the clearing again, he averts his gaze from the human corpse. After some dragging around and rearranging the creature makes a huff. Will's eyes snap towards Hannibal and he gestures at the new scene before them. The branches from the small tree representing Hannibal have somehow been bent towards the ground and the human unfolded until he is at a leaning position against another tree. The closest it can get to standing.

Hannibal seems immensely tenser when he shows the new meaning behind the tableau.

Will shakes his head and grunts.

Hannibal frowns. Will points at the body, mimes eating it and throwing up. He accentuates this with a firm shake of his head and another upset sound.

Oh, Hannibal comes to an understanding and smiles sharply. Will knows even through their language barrier what this means. *More food for me then.*

And maybe it says something about Will that all he feels is intense relief but granted with the alternative that Hannibal would rather eat him, Will thinks his feelings don't warrant psychiatric help just yet.

Will decides to work on his communication with the predator. It seems like a good idea considering they are roommates (or is cagemates the better term?) for the inconceivable future. Plus, Will thinks if he can talk to Hannibal in some way, it may help prevent anymore bloody, mutilated corpses from popping up near him again.

Will gestures to himself. “Will.” He then points towards the creature. “Hannibal.”

He does it several times. After a while, Hannibal joins in.

“W-W…iii..ll,” Hannibal struggles to say, seemingly used to communicating in snarls and his own language for the better half of his life. “Ha- ha…nn.”

Will is patient. He thumps his own chest and repeats slowly and carefully, “Wi-ll.” He then inclines his head at the creature. “Han-ni-bal.”

“Han-ni-ba. Han-ni-bah. Han-ni-bal.” Hannibal slowly but surely seems to get the hang of it.

Will then lies on the grass and fists it in his hands. He rips a few blades out and states, “grass.”

No reply.

“Come on, Hannibal,” Will says in an encouraging tone, unintentionally slipping into what Alana dubs his ‘Dog Voice.’ “You can do it. Say grass.”

Nothing. Hannibal’s only indication that he’s heard Will is shown through the unimpressed look on his face. Will tries not to be disheartened and reaches beyond the grass.

“What about dirt?” He trickles a bit between his fingers. “Say dirt.”

Still nothing.

Will pinches the dirty fabric of his shirt between his fingers. “Clothes. Can you do that for me? Say clothes.”

Hannibal blinks at him. Will sighs in frustration and flops back down, feeling the situation is hopeless.

A couple minutes pass in complete silence, only to be broken by a tentative “Will?”

Will lurches with shock at the deep rumbling sound of his name.

A clawed finger extends West. Will knows what’s West. It’s something he decidedly doesn’t want to think about or go near.

“Will?” It’s spoken with a curious inflection.

“What?” Will snaps.

“Will.” And suddenly there are claws around his wrists.

“Ugh, fine!” Will only agrees to follow Hannibal because he’s afraid that if he doesn’t then Hannibal will drag him against his will by his wrist and surely then something will break.

Will covers his nose with his free hand when he reaches the clearing because it’s been three days since he found the corpse and since then it has begun to decompose.

Will notes with horror that the bottom half of the person is completely missing now. *Ah well, at least there’s less of it to stink out.* Nearby is a pile of polished leg bones. *Charming.*

Hannibal picks a clump of grass covered in dried blood and raises it with a curious look on his face.

“Blood,” Will states simply.

“Bl- bl…” Hannibal trails off in an adorable fashion. Will tries not to find it endearing because surely that would make him insane.

“Bl – ud,” Will enunciates clearly.

“Bl-ud. Bl-ud. Bl-ud.”

Hannibal seems delighted at the new word. He then proceeds to lick the old substance off the grass but not before politely offering some to Will.

Will recoils so fast he almost falls over. “No thanks!”

Hannibal raises a discolored, shiny femur next. It has little bite marks marring the surface. It’s almost as if it has been used as some sort of chew toy. Will is reminded of his dogs and feels a pang of homesickness. He wonders who (if anyone) is looking after them.

Will shakes his head to clear it and answers, “Bone.”

“B – uh. B- uh…” Hannibal huffs in annoyance and Will tries not to smile.

“You’re doing so good. Don’t give up now,” Will praises, trying and failing not to think about how he will never get to do this with his son. The teaching him how to talk part, of course. Not the explaining the human body using an actual dead body as a prop part. “B – oh -n.”

“B – oh -n.”

Hannibal then gestures over the entire corpse.

Will hesitates. “Human.”

“Humn?”

“Hu-man,” Will says as he gestures at the corpse and then slowly towards himself. “Hu-man.”

Hannibal mimes closed eyes and staggering backwards. He falls onto the ground with a crash and gurgles around for a bit before stilling. A couple seconds pass before he stands back up again and raises an expectant brow bone at Will. Will briefly considers teaching him the word kill or murder but a mental image of Hannibal towering over a future victim, repeating in a terrifying ritualistic mantra “kill, kill, kill” has him quickly changing his mind.

“Dead.”

“Dead,” Hannibal repeats and the word curls around his tongue with a hard finality. Will tries to suppress a shiver.

Good, Will thinks to himself. S*o far so good. Time for the next step*.

“Dead human bad.” Will strings together.

Hannibal tilts his head in puzzlement. Will points to the body.

“No.” He doesn’t know how to explain the word to Hannibal but he doesn’t think he really has to. He’s used the word enough for Hannibal to know it has negative connotations and that Will only uses it when he’s upset.

Hannibal bares his teeth with a hiss and goes to stand protectively over his kill. *Alright then*.

Will quickly changes the subject by pointing towards a chirping sparrow, “Bird.”

Hannibal looks at Will with bored eyes.

Will gestures again. “Bird.”

Hannibal makes a series of noises that sound suspiciously like a goodbye. He then turns around and walks away.

“Hannibal! Hey Hannibal! Come back here! We’re not done yet!”

Will glares at the retreating back of his cage mate.

“Stubborn ass,” he grumbles, kicking at a nearby rock. “Only wants to learn the words he likes.”

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Mason comes by to pay him a visit the next day. He stares at Will through the bars of the cage, mouth open and his eyes wide with disbelief at his continued survival. Mason picks a rather awkward time as Will is halfway through the motions of bathing by the stream. Will tries not to feel embarrassed because what difference does it really make having Mason watch him wash in person or watch him through his creepy camera set up? Besides, it's kind of satisfying. Will knows this is a big fuck you to Mason. It's showing him that Will is no longer covering himself in unpleasant odors because he's terrified of being eaten and that, by association, he no longer feels threatened by Hannibal or him. Of course, none of this true. Will has just come to the recent the realization that Hannibal will eat a person, regardless of whether he stinks of sweat or decomposition. That means there's another reason why Will is currently alive. One he's morbidly curious to find out himself.

"Hello, Mason," Will says pleasantly enough. Water glistens on his bare skin in the sunlight. "Enjoying the show?"

Mason scowls. "No, I'm not enjoying the show. There is no show unless you think you and Hannibal having kindergarten lessons is entertaining."

"It must be so hard," Will says with mock sympathy, "being inconvenienced because your pet monster won't bite when you tell him to."

"I don't-"

"I heard you whispering into the sound system last night. Not sure if that kind of conditioning works on a creature that barely has a grasp of the English language."

Mason narrows his eyes and points a threatening finger through the cage bars. "Now you listen here, Graham. If you think you're safe just because you're inside a cage then you're sorely mistaken."

"A cage?" Will glances around in faux bewilderment. "And here I was thinking I was on a camping trip in the woods. Man, this changes *everything."*

Mason curls his lip and tries to make a grab for Will through the bars. "Mark my words, Will. I-"

There's a growl to the left. Both Mason and Will turn towards the noise. Hannibal has appeared and pins an intense glare onto Mason. He releases a guttural snarl, sharp teeth threateningly exposed. Mason wisely withdraws his hand.

"Bad," Mason scolds the creature.

A deep rumble emanates from Hannibal's chest, growing louder and louder until it's a menacing roar. Mason slowly backs away as the beast moves closer. Hannibal pauses beside Will, giving him a perfunctory look over. There's a red scratch mark on his inner wrist.

The creature's head snaps towards Mason and he narrows his white eyes. Hannibal then raises a clawed hand to his throat and motions across it. A trick he certainly hasn't learnt from Will.

“No, Hannibal. Bad.” Mason reaches for a wooden beating stick besides him and jabs it in Hannibal’s direction. It might have worked to frighten a smaller animal but all it does for Hannibal is make his lips tighten in irritation. Will can’t contain his laughter at the utterly done expression on Hannibal’s face.

“This isn’t over!” Mason spits and rushes to leave.

“It's probably best that next time you want to have a little talk, you do it over the speaker system,” Will calls after him.

Hannibal points his right arm in the direction of the retreating man.

Will has no qualms in granting his request. “Mason. May-son.”

“May-son.” Hannibal repeats, eyes glazed over. Will has the sneaking suspicion that he’s mentally filing the name into his memory.

Will gleefully ushers Hannibal closer and points at a nearby camera. He positions Hannibal’s head and body in its direction.

“May-son,” Will repeats and Hannibal follows him suit. Will doesn’t even have to tell him to bare his teeth afterwards. Will hopes Mason can see every single sharp tooth in Hannibal’s mouth from his surely overpriced office chair.

Hannibal sleeps beside him that night, curled up like a protective guard dog in case Mason deigns to return. Will falls asleep embarrassingly fast and wakes feeling better rested, more sated and generally healthier than ever. If you ignore the near constant back aches because sleeping on the ground is terrible for posture, of course. It’s strange, really, how much things have changed when compared to his first few days in here. He’s no longer sleep deprived or scared out of his wits or even remotely hungry. Ironically enough, Will thinks he’s physically and mentally healthier than he’s been in a long time.

He wonders what Jack would have to say about that.

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Will spends increasing amounts of time with Hannibal because it’s really rather boring being trapped in a giant cage. He has no books, no fly fishing gear, no dogs to pass the time. Just the fish in the stream and a murderous human eating monster for company. Where once Will would rebel at the thought of sitting side by side with Hannibal, he now finds he rather enjoys it.

“So, you’re all alone in here?” Will asks one day. He thinks he’s right. Surely if there were others like Hannibal living in here Will would have seen them by now.

Hannibal stares at him blankly.

"One human." Will points to himself and then at Hannibal and holds up a finger, then two and three and so on. They have practiced basic maths and English so he’s pretty sure Hannibal understands the gist of what he's saying.

The creature nods slowly and raises a single claw. He then hesitates and turns to the ground, raising his right hand and sketching with the sharp tip into the dirt. There are two antlered beings, one being considerably smaller than the other. They look happy. Hannibal gestures to the tallest one.

“Hannibal,” he growls and then lovingly caresses the drawing of the smaller one. He says something odd on his tongue, a name Will is guessing. The creature then draws another picture where there are six men; humans. Will can tell from the two legs and arms and lack of antlers. They have strange devices in their hands. The next picture is Hannibal and the other creature being dragged forcibly apart.

Hannibal sits back and holds up two clawed fingers in final explanation. He then slowly lowers the second one.

“Oh,” Will says softly.

The creature purses his lips and looks away. Will knows grief when he sees it. He also knows how unhealthy repressing emotions can be.

"Hey, it's okay," Will moves closer and awkwardly pats Hannibal's back. He thinks of Abigail. The girl he couldn’t save. He thinks of nights tossing back glass after glass of whisky, trying and failing to forget.

Will’s voice softens, "You can grieve. Just let it all out."

Hannibal becomes tenser and Will can tell that he’s withdrawing because while open aggression and hostility is relatively easy for Hannibal to show. Basically second nature, if Will's being honest to himself, softer emotions appear to be tightly locked away. Will gets it. In the wild, open vulnerability and weakness is basically a giant target saying I'm easy prey but they're not in the wild. It's time Hannibal realized that.

Before Will realizes it, he’s taking a gentle hold of Hannibal’s left hand - *talon*. He raises one sharp finger and then two.

Hannibal blinks. Will gestures to himself and then towards Hannibal.

“T-two,” he says and the words come out clumsy and stuttered because damn it, Will's never been any good at this emotional stuff. “You’re not alone anymore, Hannibal.”

Will can’t meet Hannibal’s eyes. He feels the creature’s gaze boring holes into the side of his head. God, this is so uncomfortable. He should have just kept his mouth shut. He should of -

A muscled arm surrounds Will’s shoulders and tugs him closer. Will’s mouth gapes like a fish as Hannibal settles his face into the crook of his neck and does his weird sniffing thing. Hannibal’s breathing becomes a little more raged and hitched. Will finds himself stroking a

hand down the nubs of the creature's spine before he realizes it. He blames his actions on their shared trauma of being kidnapped and imprisoned. A kind of victim bonding, if you will. It has to be that. Will refuses to think of it as anything else.

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A week passes and Will's excuses seem weak, even to him. Maybe if he was only nice that one time then he could believe he was still somewhat sane. Maybe if he didn't find himself constantly thinking of Hannibal, wanting to save some fish for him and waiting for the creature to return from a night hunting animals and *bloody* people before sleeping, he could still believe....

Will shakes his head and spends some time pacing around the cage and contemplating what to do. He has pledged his eternal friendship to a human eating monster and he can't exactly take that back without risking his own life. In fact, Will thinks their relationship is getting a little too close for comfort. Just the other night, Will had the strangest dream that Hannibal was leaning over him and pushing something into his mouth. It seemed to be evil. It was like Hannibal was filling him with murder and death, almost corrupting him. Will tries to muster regret for letting things get this far but it's hard because all he can think about is the way that the bones of Hannibal's shoulders feel so much more fragile when they rattle and shake beneath his hand.

Apparently, Hannibal's having no such issues with this drastic change in their relationship. At least, that's what Will hopes all the prancing about and collecting of flowers and mushrooms and dead birds is for. It's much better than the alternative. That Will crossed a line and Hannibal is planning on making human stew.

It turns out that Hannibal is creating another offering. Luckily, this one has a lot less dead people in it. It's full of bright flowers and colorful feathers. *It's happiness*. Will realizes as the creature leads him through the tableau that everything is in pairs. Two brown mushrooms, two blue feathers, two daisies. All artfully arranged into some kind of circular pattern.

It makes Will's heart hurt. How long had Hannibal been alone in here before Will had come along? All those years spent in captivity, having no one to turn to and talk to. No one to share his murder tableaus with and horrify. No one to learn from and teach. Will feels his empathy reaching out and a cold ache of pain in his heart. Darkness and eerie silence are all he can see and hear. Occasionally, there is a flash of terror filled eyes and running feet because everything always runs. Nothing ever stays. Until now. The loneliness abating, the dreary days lifting because he's here. The strange "human" animal. Will.

Will doesn't realize his eyes are watering until a single tear runs down his cheek. He sniffles into his tattered sleeve and hides his face in mortification. He's a criminal profiler whose seen terrible, terrible things. He's a man whose been through psychotic breaks and not once did he let himself lose it. He gripped himself by his seams, using shear willpower alone to hold

himself together. And this? This act of friendship of all things is what finally makes him lose his composure? A little empathizing with a murderous creature whose lonely.

Hannibal seems oblivious to his moral dilemma. Will is not even sure that Hannibal knows what human tears actually mean. Hannibal gestures around them with a straight back and a twinkle in his eye. It's like he can sense how much the gift means to Will and is peacocking.

Will empathizes, using all his energy to focus feeling anything but the hunger and the bone crushing loneliness.

I'm happy. I'm happy because I'm not alone anymore and damn, Will thinks to himself. *Doesn't that really go both ways?*

Now Will can't help it. Another tear falls, as silent as the first and he hastily ducks his face.

Hannibal steps closer and weaves two flowers into his hair. He frowns when Will makes another hitched sound.

Will knows what he wants. He gives Hannibal a noise of approval and smiles for him; big, wobbly and wet. He smiles even though he doesn't feel like it because that's what Hannibal needs right now.

Hannibal imitates the smile; his smaller and more reserved. Really, it's just a small upturning and curving of his thin lips but it means more to Will than the most beautiful, breathtaking of smiles because he knows it's real. Will can feel how real it is down to his bones.

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Will startles out of his dream of a nice warm shower at the strange sound of scratching. His eyes flutter open and he stares blearily at Hannibal. His throat feels rough and sore as it often does when he's been asleep for a long time and is thirsty. The creature appears to be carving some symbols into the wood of a nearby tree. Will can only make out the biggest one. It appears to be a semi-circle with a "x" directly above it. It's artistically drawn with curves.

"Hannibal?! What on earth?"

"Will." It's spoken softly and Hannibal gestures to the grass and momentarily closes his eyes. Will follows the instruction and goes back to sleep.

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Mason throws a stapler at Cordell's head. The man expertly dodges it, long used to Mason's temper tantrums by now.

"Why hasn't he eaten him yet? Why is Hannibal taking so long?" Mason grouches.

"He's just toying with him."

"He's done that before but he's never taken this long!" Mason complains.

"Don't worry," Cordell cautiously approaches Mason, using a light and soothing voice to calm him down. "It's in Hannibal's nature to eat people. He'll kill Will sooner or later, just you wait."

"It's been almost four months, Cordell. I want to see Will scream." Mason jumps up from his chair. It falls to the floor with a loud clatter. Mason ignores it and quickly paces back and forth with irritation.

Cordell rushes to right Mason's furniture. "Then we'll just flush Hannibal out. Stop sending in anymore people or animals. He'll eventually run out of things to eat and Will will be his only option besides starvation."

"I don't want him to starve to death!" Mason mopes. "He's my favourite pet!"

"He won't starve. He won't sacrifice his life for pretty meat."

"Hang on a minute. What's that above Will's head?" Mason squints into his camera system. "Zoom in! I want to see!"

Cordell rushes to Mason's keyboard and quickly adjusts the angle and increases the clarity. Mason impatiently shoves him aside when he's done and hunches over to look. "A mark?"

"Multiple marks." Cordell pauses, contemplating. "It appears to be some strange symbols."

Mason clicks his fingers and holds out an expectant hand. "Get me my book on wendigo's."

Cordell throws himself into the direction of the bookshelf and hurriedly scans the spines.

"Hurry up! You're taking too long!" Mason snaps impatiently. "I want to see what it means and I want to see it *now*!"

Cordell quickly snatches up the black tattered book and rushes over. "Here it is."

"Well, what are you waiting for? Look it up!"

Cordell deftly flicks through the pages to the "wendigo signs" section. "Hmm, oh no. This isn't good."

"What? Please say it's the symbol short for future snack."

“The large one in the center of the tree is a possessive pronoun. Roughly translated into the English language as mine.”

“Mine?” Mason repeats loudly, impatiently snatching the book and scanning quickly over the page himself. “What’s that supposed to mean?”

“You know how wendigos are rather territorial creatures. They usually mark their territory and food and-”

“Yada, yada, yada,” Mason interrupts with irritation. “Yes, I *know* all about that. I did my research before buying Hannibal. Honestly Cordell, I’m not an idiot. You can’t just buy a wendigo without knowing the basics first. Hannibal hasn’t marked anything in the ten years I’ve had him. You know him, always acting too good for his cage, too good for his food. He wouldn’t dare put his name on something beneath him. If he wasn’t such a scary thing, I would have had him put down ages ago. So, if this isn’t about his cage or his food then what is it about?”

Mason takes a deep breath and reads again. This time slowly and more in depth.

“Now, let’s see.” A pause. “Ah, yes. The symbol for possession. A wendigo may use this to establish rights over territory to others of its kind. The symbol may also be found near a source of food; usually half eaten remains that have been left for later consumption. Signs for possession have also been left by the species above the dwellings of potential mates during the act of courtship. A clear sign to others that they are off limits. Sometimes, this is without the knowledge or permission of those they have chosen to court.” Mason's mood significantly perks up when he realizes he might be privy to some weird human-wendigo sex shows in the future. He wonders how much he could sell the footage for. “The sign for possession can also signify friendship or family as it guarantees the safety of all those that reside within the territory.”

A heavy silence settles over them.

Mason blinks, trying to make sense of everything. “Does Hannibal want to fuck him, eat him or play best friends?”

Cordell hesitates. “I have no idea.”

“What about the other symbols? The smaller ones scattered on nearby trees.”

“They’re not in the book either. I’ve already checked. We have to keep in mind that there is much that hasn’t been documented about wendigos yet.”

Mason growls in aggravation, feeling like Hannibal is once again playing chicken with him and leaving Mason well and truly out of the loop. Nothing is worth being beaten by an inferior being. Nothing.

“Get Will out of there! If Hannibal’s not going to kill him then I’ll do it myself. With my own two hands if I have to.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Just do what you’re told!” Mason snaps.

“Um, Mason….”

“What?!” Mason’s annoyance has risen to dangerous, murderous levels. His hands are already itching towards the nearest implement on his desk.

“The speaker system is on.”

Mason hangs his head and sighs heavily, “You bring this on yourself, Cordell.”

He then throws a pair of scissors at Cordell’s leg. The cook easily jumps to the side and they fly past him. He dashes out of the room as a paper weight comes hurtling after his rather soft head.

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Will curls into himself and sighs heavily as he digests this new information. Hannibal is a creature called a wendigo. Apparently, wendigos eat people. Oh and no matter whether human or beast, it appears that everyone is weirdly fascinated with him. Jack needs his mind, Hannibal desires his company and Mason wants his blood for some sort of cocktail drink. Maybe it would just be easier to give in? Let Mason have him and end this waiting game. After all, he isn’t going to escape here alive. Why prolong the inevitable? Or even worse, force Hannibal into killing him out of sheer starvation. How emotionally devastating that would be when he considered Will as important to him as family.

He hears a rustle and turns in that direction.

“Oh, hey Hannibal,” Will greets tiredly.

“Will.” The wendigo frowns and gestures towards his face.

“No, I’m fine. I’m not sad at all.” And because Will is feeling particularly generous, he pats the place beside him.

Hannibal instantly sits down, close enough that they are touching shoulder to shoulder.

The wendigo points at the sky, a question perched on his lips.

“Mason,” Will supplies.

“May-son.”

Will smiles crookedly. “You’re really getting the hang of that.”

“Kill.”

Will startles, turning to look at the wendigo.

“Kill?” Hannibal repeats again, brow bone raised curiously.

Will closes his eyes, deliberating what to tell him. Will doubted very well that Hannibal could stop what Mason is planning to do. He probably had tranquilizers and guns and a million other safety mechanisms that lock the cage. The worst thing that could happen is Hannibal being forced to fight tooth and nail only to fail and watch Will get dragged away kicking and screaming. Will couldn’t do that to him. Not after the story of the little wendigo which Will is starting to suspect was Hannibal’s past mate or family.

Will says the word “kill” in a light, happy voice. He must look psychotic on camera, but it doesn’t matter what other people think. This is about Hannibal associating “kill” with something pleasant. He wants the wendigo to believe that when Will’s taken away, he’s not going somewhere terrible but somewhere very happy and pain free.

“Good?” Hannibal asks.

“Very good,” Will agrees softly.

The grating of the door opening is strange and far off. The sound of multiple feet crunching through the undergrowth makes Hannibal’s muscles tense in preparation for a fight. A growl rips free from bared teeth and Will shushes him. When the four men finally arrive, they are clad in a strange form of armour. They raise their tranquilizer guns threateningly. Will notes that on their belt they have weapons that look a little more damaging. Hannibal’s earlier growl becomes louder and more hostile as he hunches down.

“It’s okay,” Will soothes.

“Kill Will?”

“Yes.”

The men glance at each other in confusion when Hannibal looks relieved at that, obviously expecting a fight or angry retaliation.

“The hell?” one mutters softly. “Didn’t the boss say he liked him?”

“Hannibal doesn’t know what the word kill means,” Will sharply retorts, “and I’d like to keep it that way.”

“Dumb animal,” another man taunts and Will wants to punch him for it. Instead, Will steps towards Verger's men, arms raised in front of him in a gesture of surrender. His hands are roughly bound and he’s tugged along brutally. Hannibal takes a step towards him and one man raises his gun.

“Stay,” he orders sternly, “or I’ll shoot.”

“Will?”

“Hannibal, it’s okay. Everything’s fine.” Will gives him a smile and his jaw hurts from it. “All good. See.”

They move towards the exit with Hannibal secretly and stealthily trailing after the group. Verger's men don’t know they’re being followed but Will can sense Hannibal’s presence scorching like the sun. They knock on the first door; two fast raps and two slow. It's opened by a man on the inside and Will is shoved through it. Verger's minions, too cocky and arrogant, don't bother shielding Will's eyes from the password panel this time. Most likely thinking that one man who should be malnourished and weak from lack of proper nutrition is no match for five highly trained and strong guards. It's the first of many mistakes. Will is pulled roughly through the final door and he takes his first breath of freedom in months. It tastes stale and bland on his tongue.

A guard turns to him. “Smart move, Graham. Mason always hates it when we hurt his pet.”

Will’s mouth opens in protest because *Hannibal’s not a bloody pet, alright?* but his words are lost when a smack of a barrel sends him reeling. He falls hard against the side of the cage with a clang. Will blinks blearily and raises a hand towards his throbbing face. Once understanding dawns, he retaliates with a hit of his own because he's not going down without a fight. Will finds himself being dragged and boxed in the ear while he’s held down by multiple sets of hands. There’s ringing in his ears so he can’t hear anything but he can see Hannibal burst through the underbrush. The wendigo scrabbles against the bars with his claws, white eyes narrowed menacingly at the responsible parties.

The men cackle with glee, standing just beyond Hannibal's reach.

“Look at poor whittle Hannibal stuck in his cage and unable to get out.”

They hit Will again, right in front of Hannibal. Will can’t hear anything but he knows from Hannibal’s open mouth that he’s screaming.

“Ooops, did we do something bad?” an armed guard sniggers.

Hannibal spins around and darts with superhuman speed deep into the woods.

“Well, that was disappointing. He sure moves on quick.”

There’s a blur of black and suddenly something is slamming hard enough against the bars that they vibrate.

“W-what just happened?!”

Another blur and a bang. This time a small dent in the metal bars form.

“Hannibal, no!” Will pleads desperately as he rises to his feet but it’s no use.

Thud. Crack. The dent worsens slightly, jutting outward at a strange angle.

“What the fuck is it doing?!”

“I think it’s trying break through the bars.”

“By dashing its head against the wall? The thing’s suicidal!” The unspoken leader of Verger’s men opens fire, but Hannibal is moving so fast and the bars are too close together for him to aim clearly. He quickly runs out of ammunition, missing every time.

Will bites his lip, watching the way Hannibal’s body takes the brunt of the hits when he charges at the cage bars. It must have been excruciatingly painful and it was making little to no difference. What was Hannibal doing? He wasn’t usually this destructive. Not without reason.

The men, too frightened to think clearly, exhaust all their supplies before realizing what little difference Hannibal’s efforts have actually been making.

“Guys, guys! Stop. Look. We’re okay. He can’t get out. Mason designed it too well.” The leader stops the others. “He’s just making a bit of a fuss is all.”

A collective sigh of relief leaves the group and they drop their empty weapons with a nervous laugh.

Hannibal falls back onto his hooves and tilts his head, slightly breathless from his exertion. He smiles at them chillingly before uttering three strange words. Will will learn later that they roughly translate to "adapt, evolve, become."

Will falls to the ground and screams. He writhes in agony, much to the shock of Verger’s men. His head splits but instead of blood pouring out, something else protrudes. Something hard and shiny. Will knows on an instinctual level that it’s antlers. *His antlers*. His skin seemingly hardens and shifts color. He watches the inky blackness spread, feels his stomach hollow and the *hunger*, so much more powerful and painful when he’s experiencing it himself. His belly spasms with the churning need, to attack, to tear, to consume.

Suddenly, Verger’s men aren’t so tough anymore. Defenseless with their empty weapons, meaty and tasty from being plied with Cordell’s food, they suddenly become the best snack Will’s ever seen. He licks his lips. Will is on the closest man so fast, he himself feels disoriented. *Right, superior reflexes*. Will angles his head and sinks his teeth into his neck, ripping into the soft flesh. Blood gushes into his mouth and damn - has it always tasted this good? Had Will been surrounded for years by the most glorious sweet drink he’s ever tasted and not known it? It’s probably for the best. If he had, nothing would have stopped him from licking Jack’s crime scenes clean, not even the bossy man himself. Blood can only do so much though. It merely fans the fire inside so Will throws the struggling man onto the floor and rips into his stomach where the good stuff is. All those raw, squishy organs. It’s exquisite but he needs more of it. A lot more. The rest of Verger’s men have made a dash for the Verger Estate. They barely get a couple of meters away before Will is hauling them to the ground and gorging on their insides.

Hannibal tuts in disapproval from the cage. Will realizes that he hasn’t had any fresh human for a good week or two and Will supposes it’s impolite not to offer some of his kill when the

reason Hannibal is hungry in the first place is because of him. Will pauses and contemplates leaving Hannibal to starve anyway. It's not like he doesn't deserve it. Hannibal narrows his eyes threateningly, seemingly reading his mind. Will grumbles and reluctantly takes one of his kills over so he can pass pieces through the bars.

The heart was the first to go in and Hannibal gives Will a scrutinizing look before accepting it. Will scowls because that wasn't intentional, honest. It was just the first thing he grabbed. If anything it was his subconscious' fault so - okay, that's not helping prove his point.

"You're an ass… you k-know," Will says but the English comes out broken and his throat closes up uncomfortably. He swallows and tries again. "I should have," he coughs, "had a - a choice. I didn't choose this… life."

Will has to pause again and instead a growl leaves his throat. The noise works in ways his words hadn't. Hannibal's gaze snaps towards him and his eyes take on a pleading quality.

"Two." Hannibal says firmly. "Only way."

"Not," Will stops, keeling over and pressing his talons to his knees. This talking thing was hard in wendigo form. His throat obviously not designed for this type of communication. Will really should have given Hannibal more credit with the ease he spoke to him. "Only."

Hannibal purses his lips and gives Will a dubious look. Will sighs because he knows he's right. Being around humans for a few minutes drove Will insane with blood lust. He can't imagine how it's been torturing Hannibal to have Will so close, constantly inhaling the sweet scent of his flesh and never being able to bite. His teeth must have ached. Hannibal's self control must be impeccable.

This is all Will's fault anyway, for promising a wendigo lifelong companionship. That still doesn't mean Will isn't bitter about it.

Hannibal makes a pleased noise and nods towards the fallen men.

Will lowers his head and scowls. *I didn't have a choice and you know it.*

Hannibal inclines his head towards the door of the enclosure and Will contemplates again of running off without him. The wendigo's chest rumbles with warning and his voice has a low timbre to it that has Will scrambling. Will recounts the passwords from memory, having watched Mason's men enter it themselves (idiots) and suddenly he's through the first door and opening the second door with a hiss. Hannibal moves towards the exit slowly, almost leisurely. Each step makes Will's heart race because things are different now. He can physically feel the shift in their dynamic.

When Hannibal is close enough to touch him, he reaches forward and presses a claw to Will's hollow cheek. Will doesn't know why the touch is grounding. He doesn't understand much of anything at the moment. He blames his wendigo instincts and thinks perhaps he's submitting to a wendigo he knows is older and more wise.

"Kill Will bad," Hannibal slowly says, fingers tightening with barely concealed anger.

Will nods jerkily. He can sense though that Hannibal understands why he did it and that Hannibal sees it as the act of protection that it was and not a betrayal. Will is glad because he really doesn't want to be on the wrong side of those giant antlers.

"Mason?" Hannibal's voice is hard. "Kill Will."

Will pauses and thinks what the heck, the guy's been asking for it. "Yes."

"Kill Mason?"

Will can't keep the glee from his voice as he utters, "Make him dead."

Hannibal smiles widely, his sharp teeth peeking out from behind his lips. Will returns the smile and gestures at the Verger mansion. *Go ahead*. Hannibal points sternly at the spot Will is on. *Stay.* Will disagrees and opts to follow him instead. He needs to know if Mason found Margot after all and if he did, whether she was allowed to keep their baby.

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They leave The Verger Estate a short while later covered from head to toe in gore. Margot was nowhere in sight and that gives Will a small niggling of hope. Maybe her and the baby survived Mason, after all. Maybe that's why Mason was so set on getting revenge on Will.

Will turns to Hannibal and thinks it's rather worrying that the sight of blood splattered skin doesn't even bother him in the slightest. In fact, it has an almost opposite effect. Will finds it kind of, well, attractive. It shows how superior in strength both he and Hannibal are. That no number of people, armed or not, could ever capture them again. He's blaming the new wendigo instincts for that as well.

They reach the tree line and Hannibal offers him a clawed hand in invitation. A start to a new life. Will hesitates. He could still refuse. Say fuck it to the wendigo that had no right to make the decisions he did in regards to Will's…species? But then, what else could Will do? With little understanding of anything about wendigo nature other than the fact that they eat people and are always hungry, he's bound to wind up dead or captured. If Will was still human then he might have been able to go back to his job and his dogs and his little secluded house. Maybe he could have tracked down Margot and they could have raised their baby together in some sort of platonic friendship. He's not still human though. Hannibal made sure of that.

Will takes the talon, eyes gravitating towards Hannibal's own and he stops breathing.

Now that Will is a wendigo and is familiar with the gripping hunger, he can see Hannibal clearer. He can look past the ache of an empty stomach and longing for companionship and *see more.* Hannibal's design comes together before Will's very eyes. All those little things Hannibal did suddenly make a lot more sense. The dreams of Hannibal putting things into his mouth (Most likely human flesh when Will thinks about it), the strange symbols carved into

the trees, the human sacrifice, Hannibal's low timbre when he chanted those three words, the non-murderous tableau which wasn't a sign of friendship but a – a romantic declaration?

Long story short, the conversion from human to wendigo wasn't a quick process. This was a long ritual that Hannibal had painstakingly conducted in secret for months.

Will feels a hysterical laugh bubble free from his throat. All this time he had thought he was teaching Hannibal how to be more empathetic and human when in reality Hannibal had only been playing along to mask his true intentions. To turn Will into a wendigo. It was so manipulative and deceptive that Will almost feels like he ought to congratulate Hannibal on a game well played. He had fooled them all, Mason included, and achieved his goal. Will had become.

It will be just the two of them now, doing whatever it is that wendigos do when they're not ripping the guts out of humans.

End Notes

The end :).

5/7/18 edit - Or is it?

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!